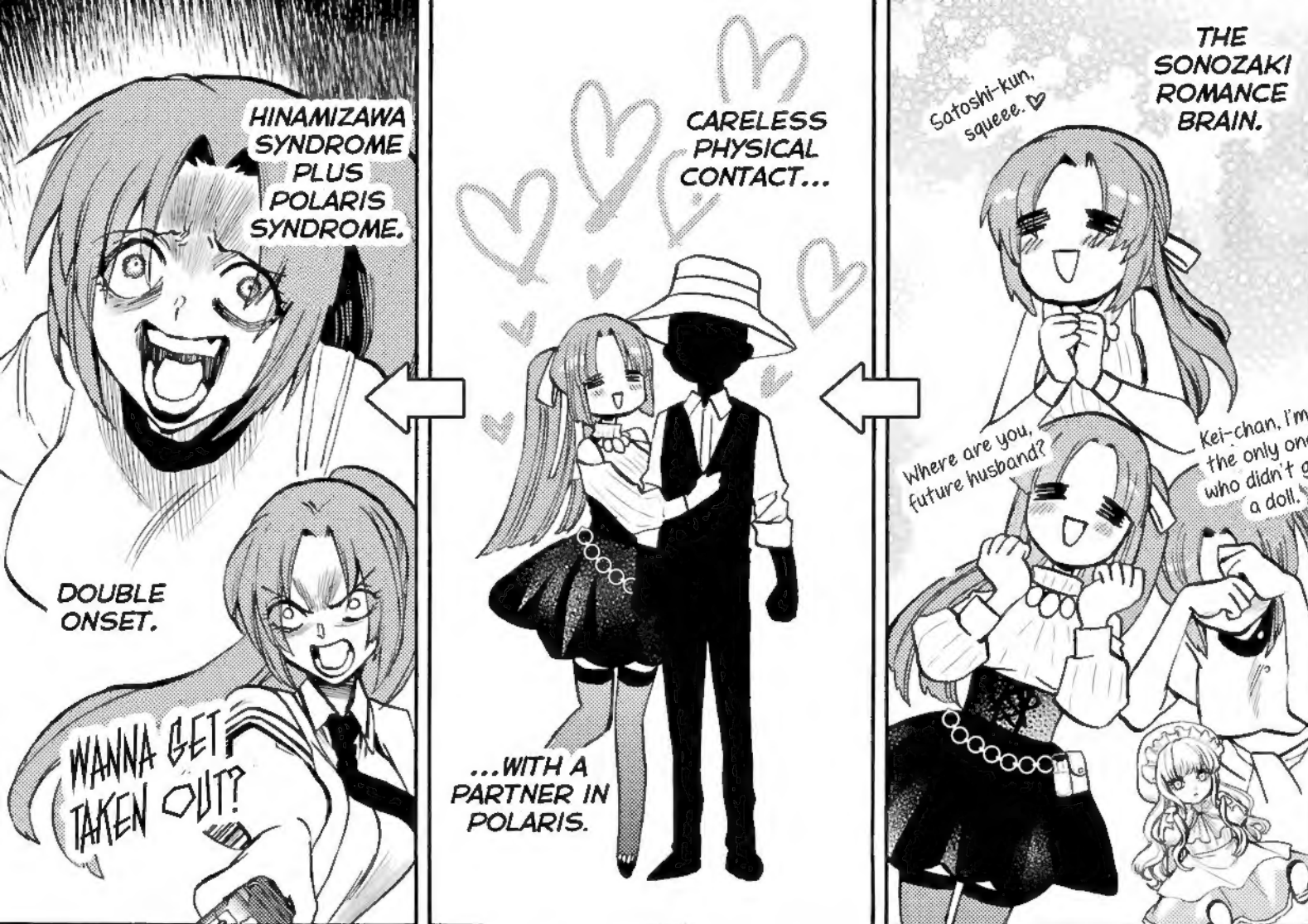
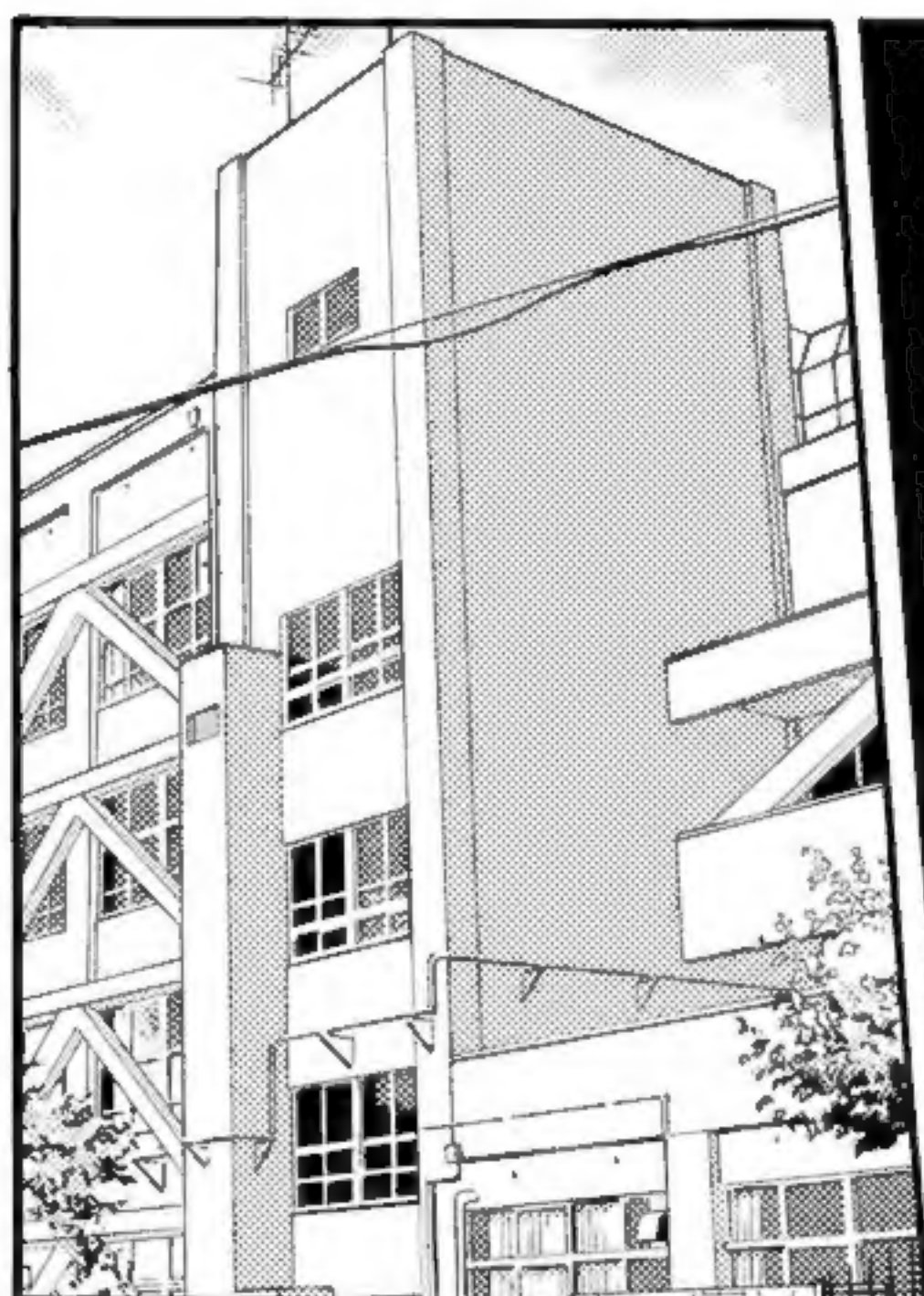


TAMAKI'S FIRST LOVE

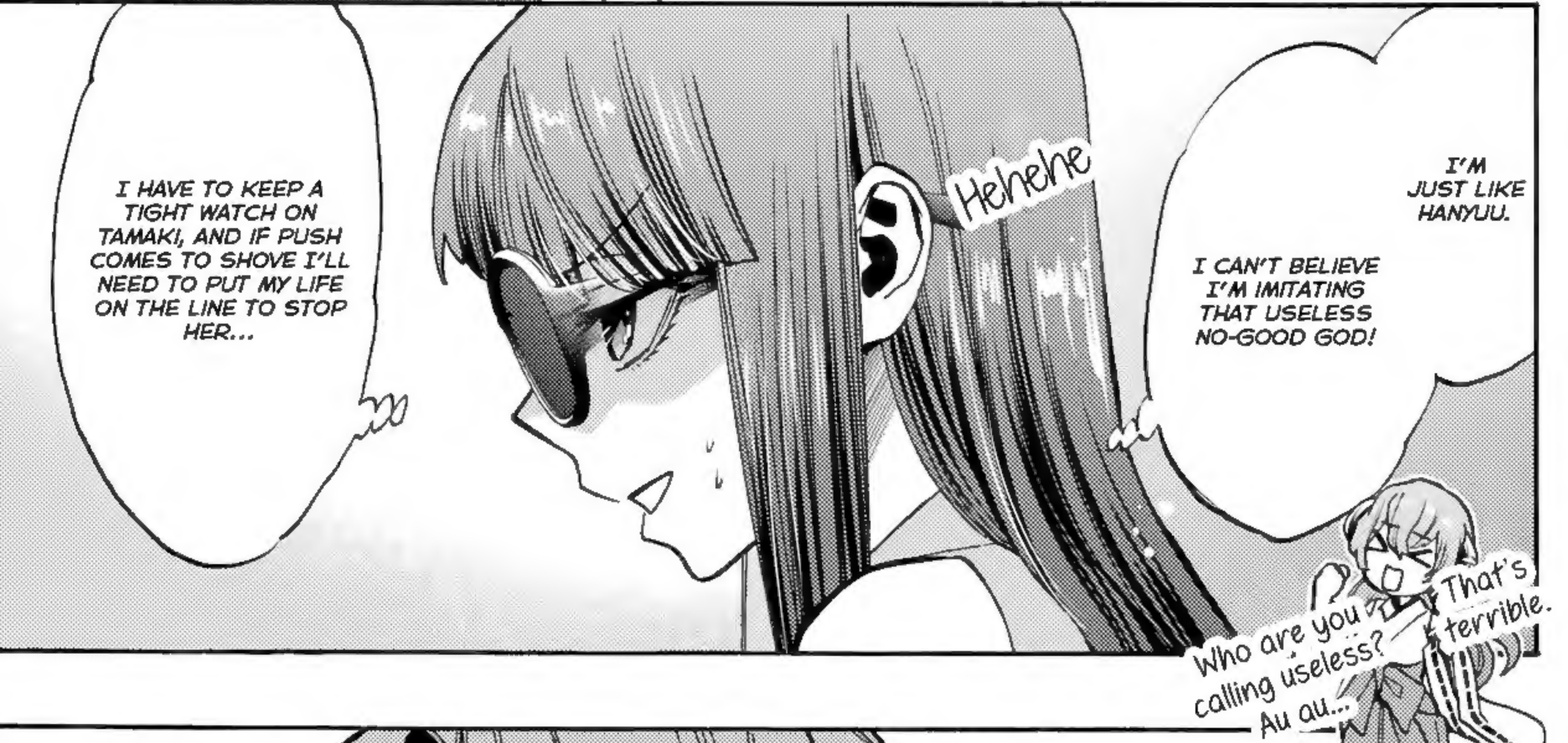




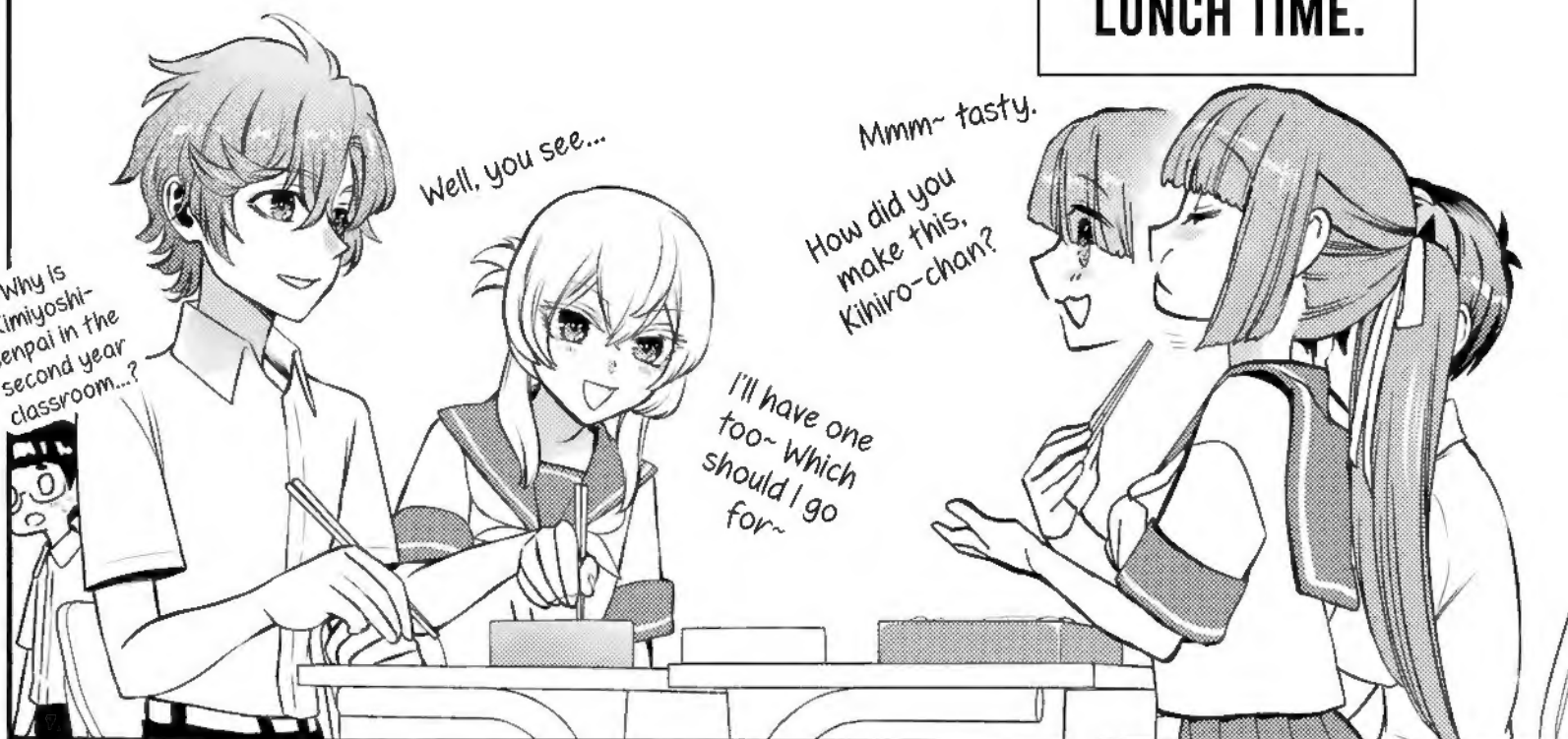




I CAN'T
OVERLOOK THIS!
I NEED TO SEE
HOW TAMAKI IS
DOING!!



LUNCH TIME.



CLUB TIME.



**THIS IS
ABNORMAL!!**



**NO CONTACT
WHATSOEVER
WITH THE BOY
SHE LIKES!!!**

FOR AN
ULTIMATE
ROMANCE-
BRAINED
SONOZAKI
GIRL, IT'D BE
NATURAL FOR
HER TO MAKE
A HOMEMADE
LUNCH FOR HIM.
WORST CASE,
EVEN FEEDING
HIM MOUTH TO
MOUTH.

Lunch from a loving
wife!! Complete with an
energy drink!!

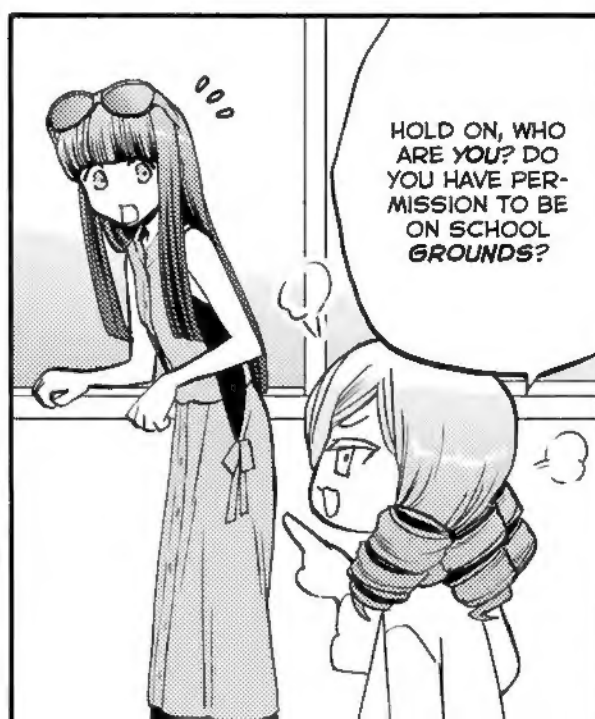
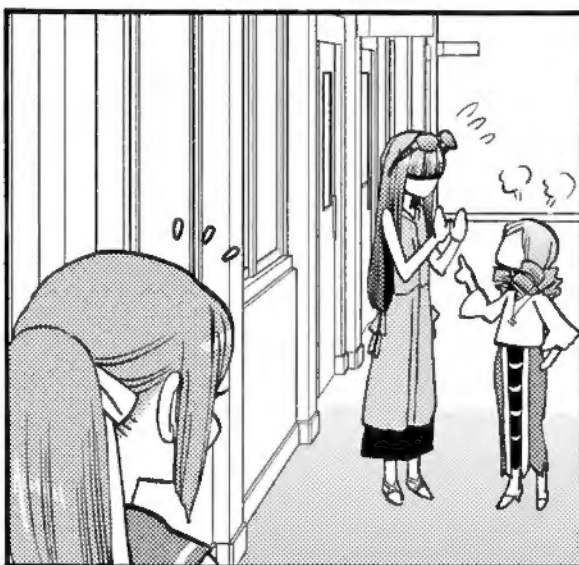


All I can
think of
is an ag-
gressive
attack
with
zero
sense of
personal
space.

I chewed it
nice and soft
for you.



BIG SIS
RIKA?



HOLD ON, WHO
ARE YOU? DO
YOU HAVE PER-
MISSION TO BE
ON SCHOOL
GROUNDS?



WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT SCHOOL, BIG SIS RIKA?

I'm safe...



AN ACQUAINTANCE OF SONOZAKI-SAN, ARE YOU?

FROM NOW ON, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM COMING ON SCHOOL GROUNDS WITHOUT PERMISSION.

YES MA'AM...



THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?!

HUUH?!



Sakuya-kun, so that's his name.

SAKUYA-KUN IS A REALLY NICE BOY.



...

I WAS HOPING TO SEE THIS BOY YOU LIKE, TAMAKI...



BACK
AROUND
FESTIVAL
TIME, WHEN
INORI'S
FATHER AND
HIS MEN
BARGED
INTO
POLARIS...

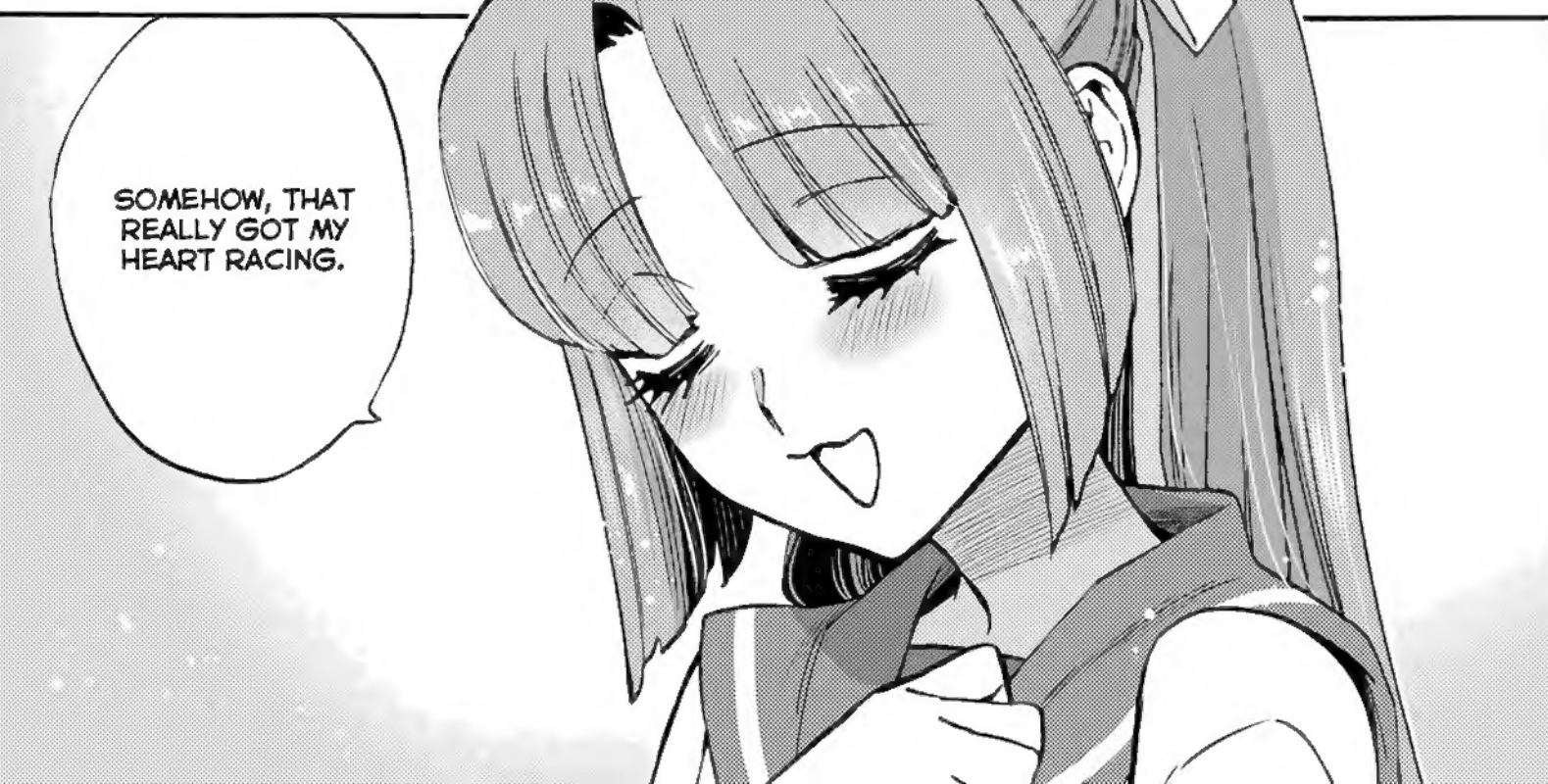
HE WAS THERE,
HOLDING HIS
GROUND TO
DEFEND THE
OTHER KIDS.



ON TOP OF THAT, WHEN
WE CAME TO HELP HE
SAID *YOU'RE JUST
GIRLS, IF YOU DON'T
GET OUT OF HERE
YOU'RE IN DANGER,*
TRYING TO PROTECT US
TOO.

THAT WAS
AMAZING,
WHAT A
COURAGEOUS
KID.

EVEN AS A
MEMBER
OF POLAR-
IS, HE WAS
WILLING TO
STAND UP
TO PEOPLE
LIKE THEM.



SOMEHOW, THAT
REALLY GOT MY
HEART RACING.



I THINK I
HEARD UNCLE
SATOSHI WAS
LIKE THAT
TOO.

I BEGAN TO
WONDER
IF OUR
ENCOUNTER
WAS FATE.

AHH, WHAT
SORT OF
FOOD DOES
HE LIKE?
I'D LOVE TO
BRING HIM
SOME AS A
GIFT.

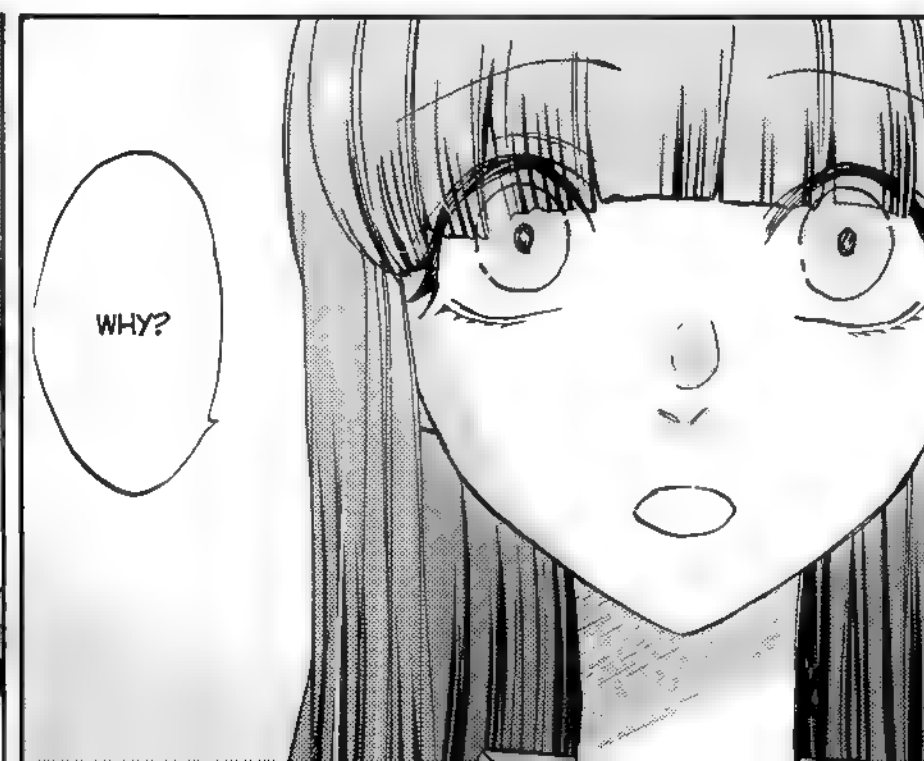
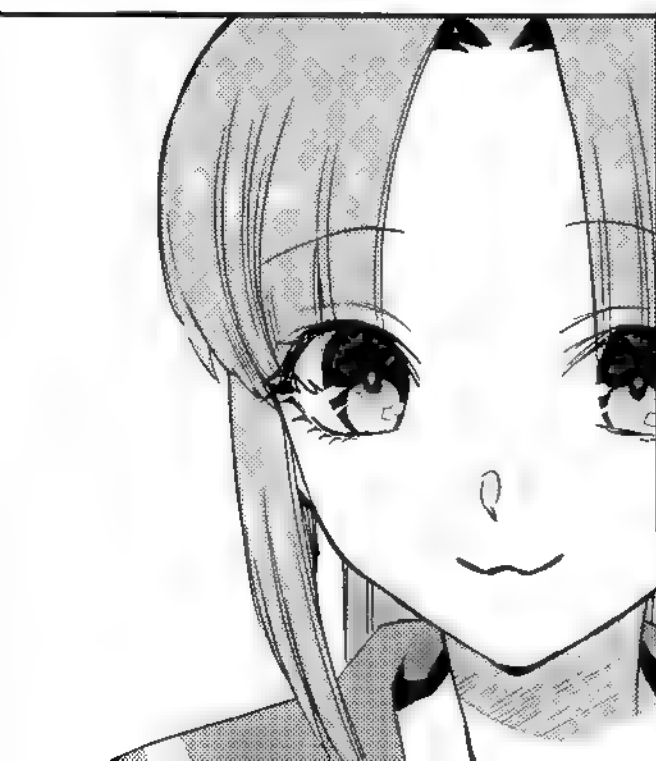
WHEN YOUR
STOMACH IS
FULL, YOUR
HEART IS FULL
TOO, YOU
KNOW?


MAYBE IF
HE JOINED
THE CLUB
I'D BE ABLE
TO SPEND A
LITTLE TIME
WITH HIM,
BUT...



SO ARE
YOU NOT IN
CONTACT
WITH HIM?

...





I'M THE FUTURE HEAD
OF THE SONOZAKI
FAMILY, RIGHT...?

I NEED TO
BE A ROLE
MODEL FOR
THE ENTIRE
VILLAGE.

RIGHT NOW...
EVERYONE
IS SAYING
**IT'S VERY
IMPORTANT
TO RESPECT
EACH OTHER'S
PERSONAL
SPACE.**

IT WOULD BE
UNREASONABLE
OF ME TO GET
CLOSE TO A
MEMBER OF
POLARIS JUST
BASED ON A
PERSONAL
WHIM.

DON'T YOU
AGREE?



I SEE...
THAT'S THE
SITUATION
...

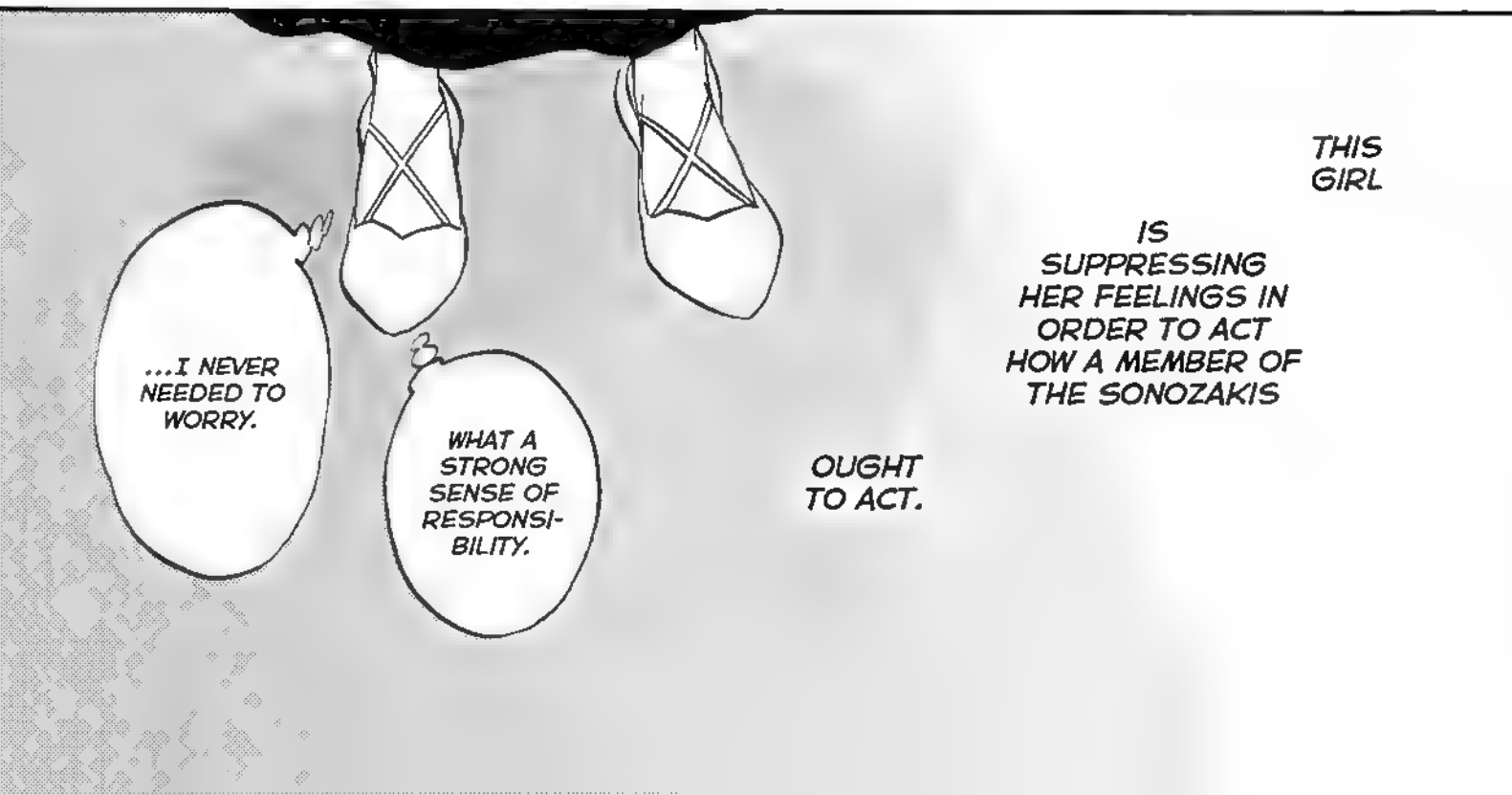
THE TRUTH
IS, SHE
WANTS TO
SPEAK TO
HIM, TO
GET TO
KNOW HIM,
TO DEVOTE
HERSELF
TO HIM.

SHE YEARNS
TO BE
INVOLVED
WITH HIM.

He's with
Polaris,
after all.

PLUS, IF I
SUDDENLY
APPROACH-
ED HIM
WITH AN
ULTERIOR
MOTIVE,

THAT MIGHT
SCARE
SAKUYA-KUN,
RIGHT?



THIS
GIRL

IS
SUPPRESSING
HER FEELINGS IN
ORDER TO ACT
HOW A MEMBER OF
THE SONOZAKIS

OUGHT
TO ACT.

...I NEVER
NEEDED TO
WORRY.

WHAT A
STRONG
SENSE OF
RESPONSI-
BILITY.



AUNT RIKA, YOU'RE
VERY WELL LIKED, YOU
MUST'VE HAD YOUR
FAIR SHARE OF
EXPERIENCES WITH
LOVE, YES?

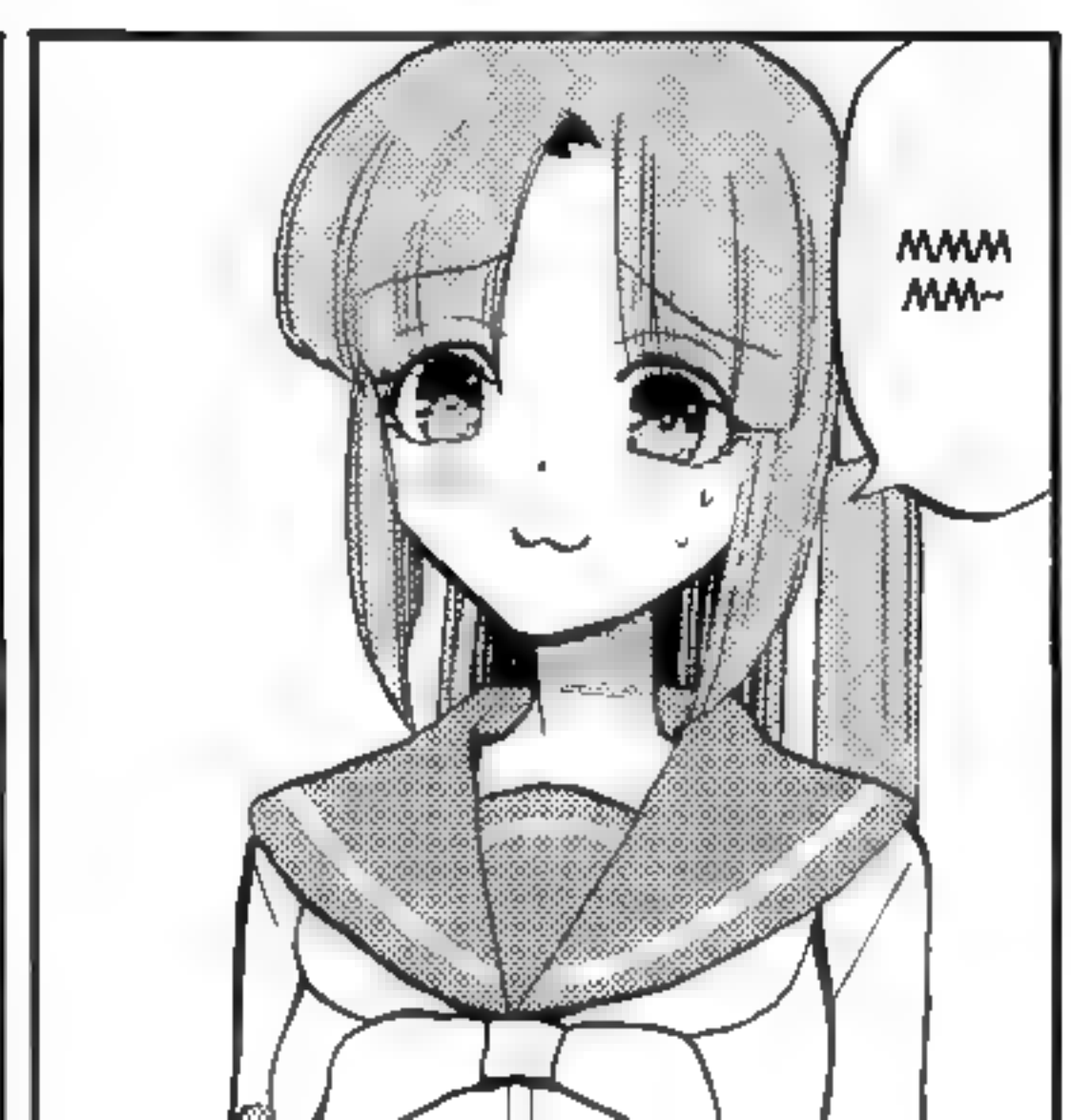
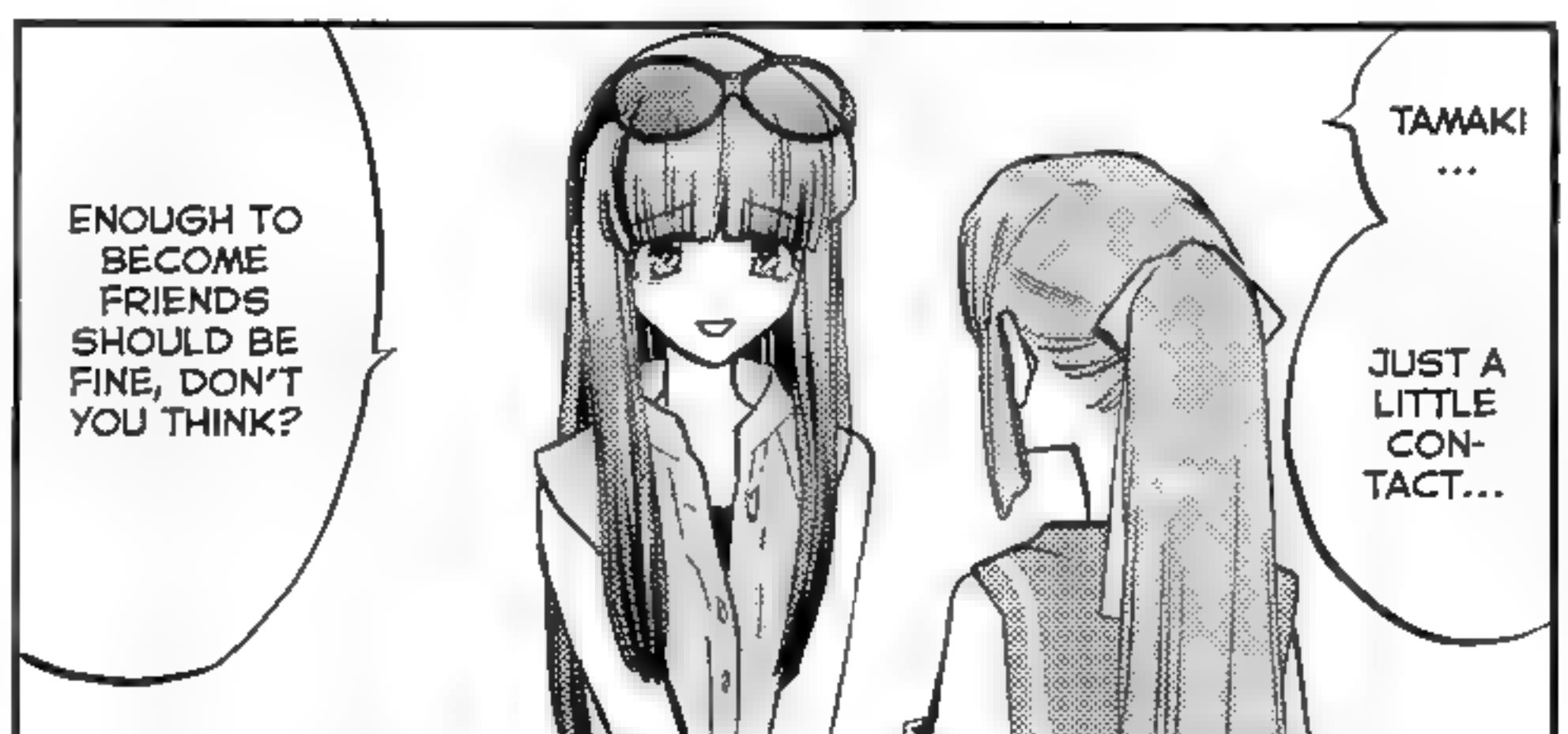
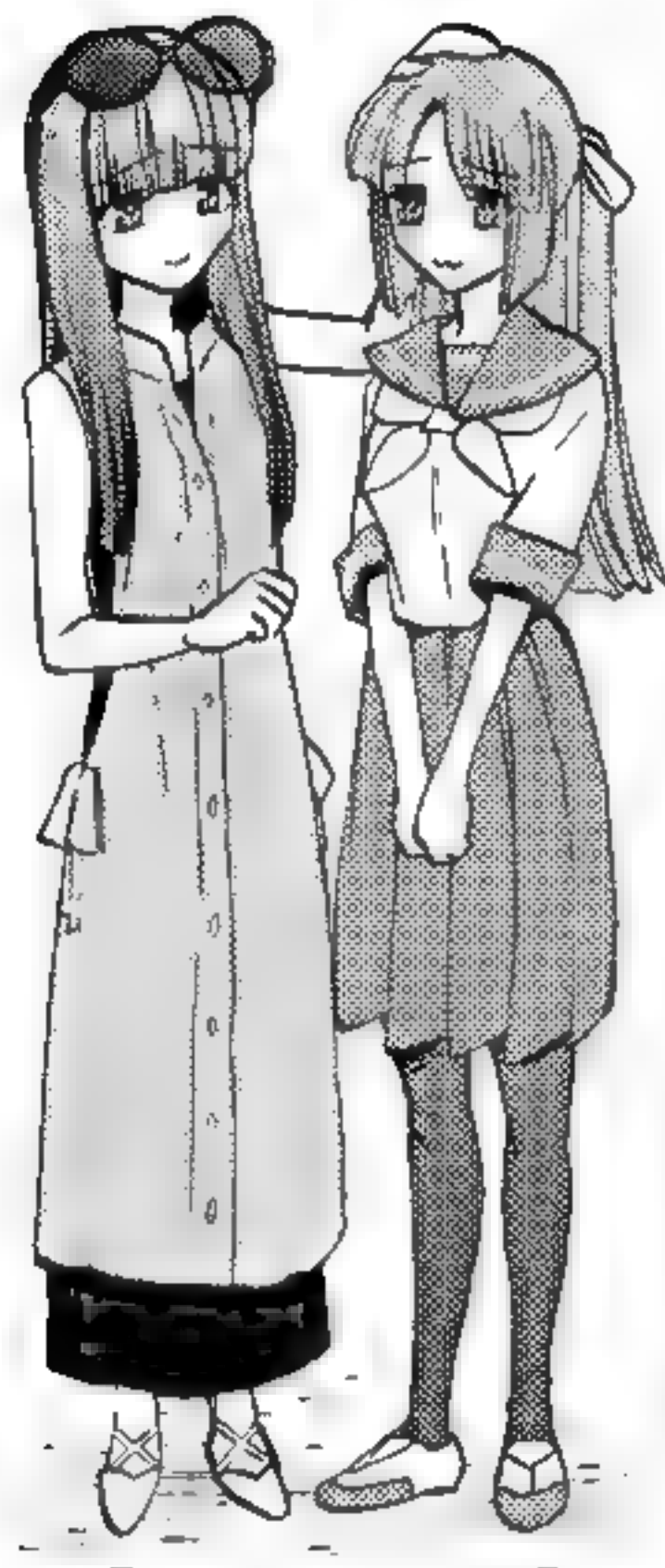


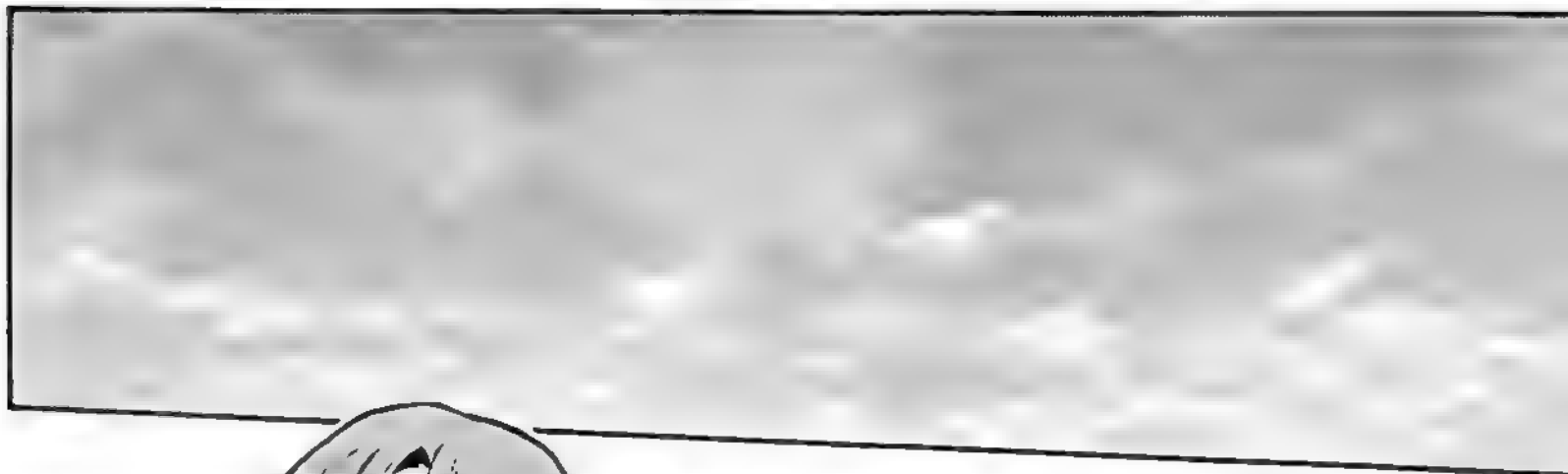
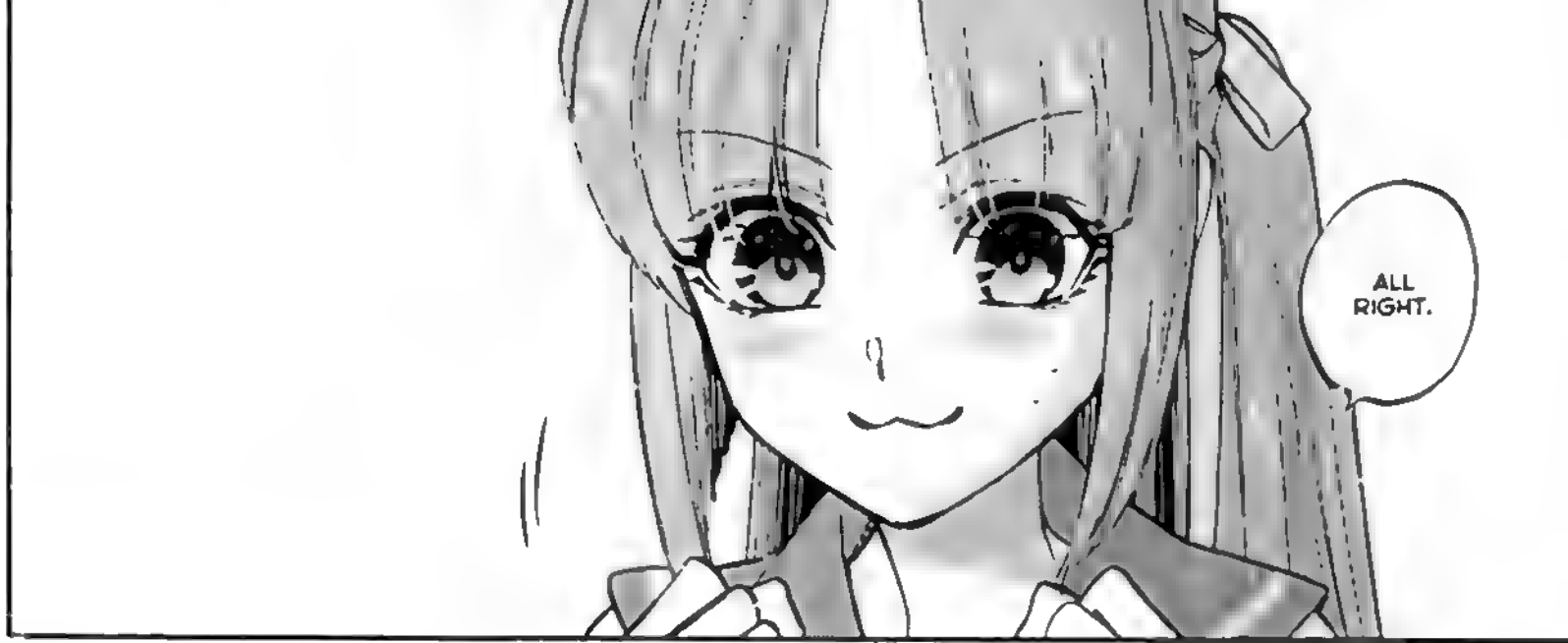
IT'S
PAINFUL...

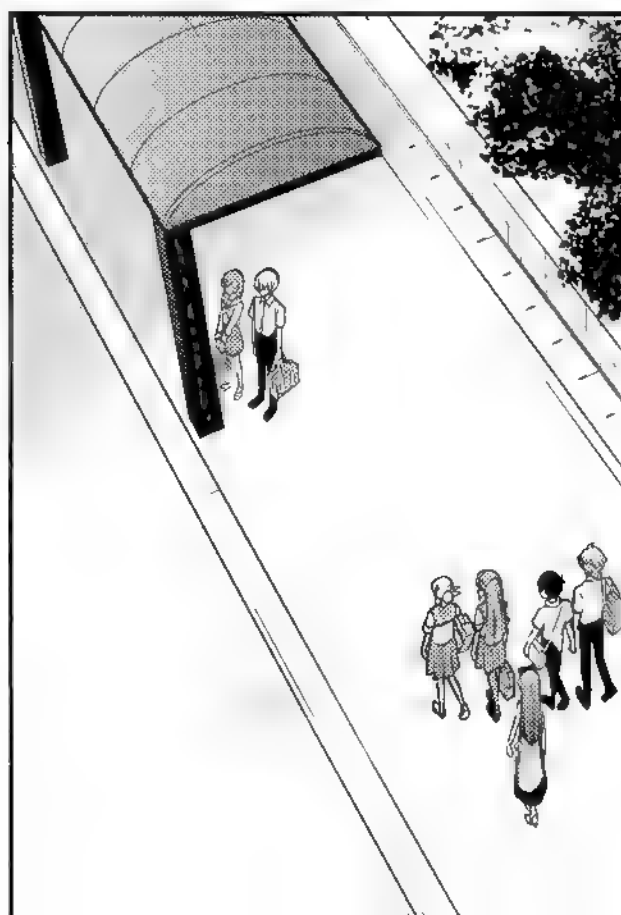
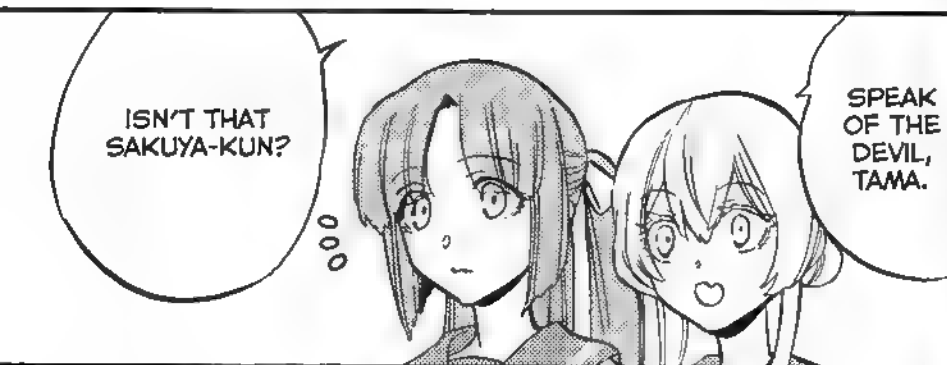


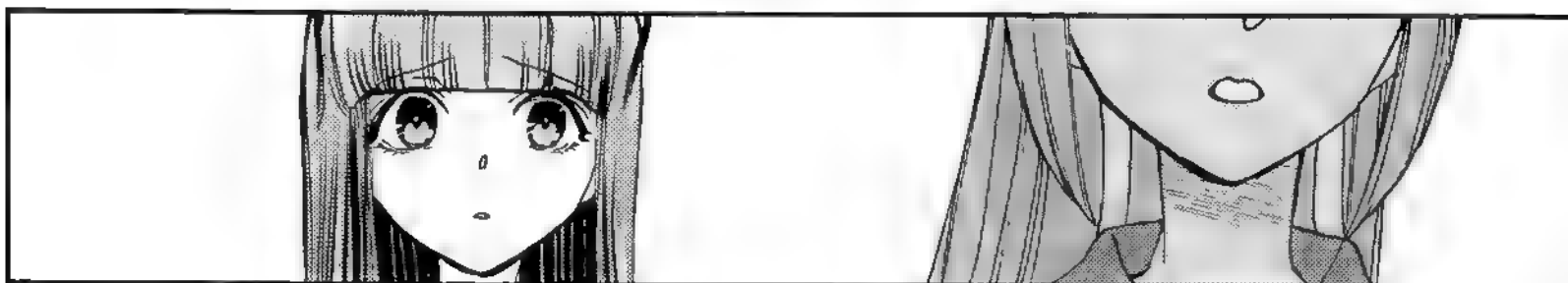
...LIKING
SOMEONE
BUT KNOWING
YOU CAN'T BE
INVOLVED
WITH THEM.







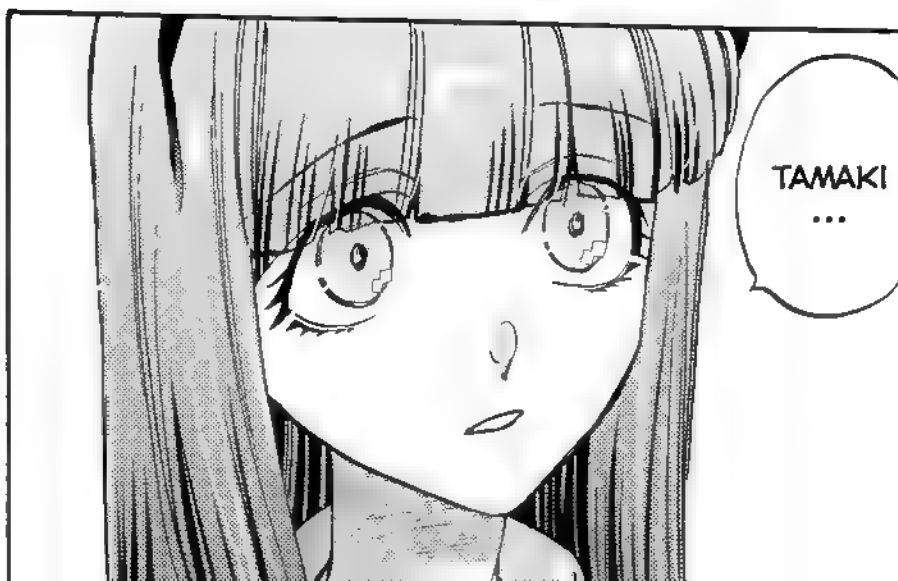
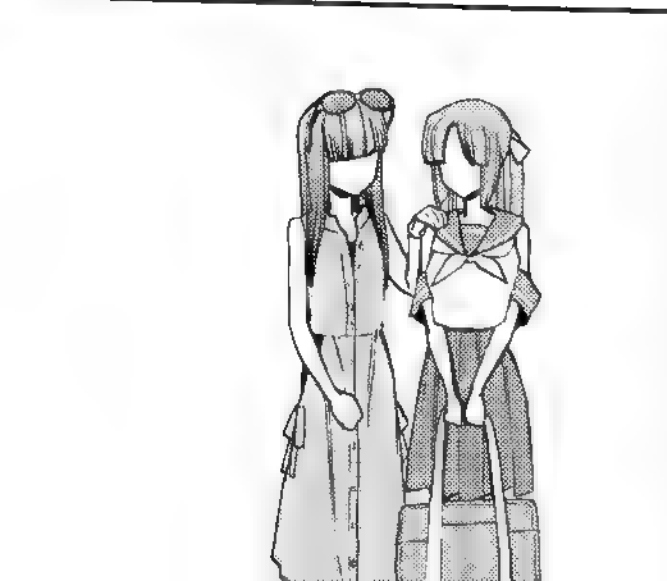







IT'S A
REALLY
WARM
FEELING
...

SEEING THE
PERSON YOU
LIKE LOOKING
HAPPY.



TAMAKI
...



AS THE
PRIESTESS OF
OYASHIRO-SAMA,
I GUARANTEE
IT...

I'M SURE FATE
WILL FIND YOU
A WONDERFUL
PARTNER TOO,
TAMAKI.

...SUCH A
WONDERFUL
GIRL.

BECAUSE
YOU'RE
ALREADY...



Hello, I'm Ryukishi07.

Could you write some sort of story centered on "Keiichi and the gang's kids?"

Koizumi-san, the editor of the "Higurashi no Naku Koro ni" manga adaptation, had been approaching me with that question for a long time. Back then, I was too busy writing "Umineko no Naku Koro ni" and other projects, so I had to put the idea on the backburner, but I'm so grateful that it was finally able to take shape as part of the "Higurashi 20th Anniversary Project."

Now then, "Higurashi Rei" is a work that tackles modern themes like tolerance of different cultures and respecting diversity. However, if we rephrase it as 'trouble with your neighbors,' that's undoubtedly a theme humans have had to deal with since prehistoric times, an unavoidable problem that stems from living in a community.

Nowadays, thanks to smartphones and the internet, we live in an age where people can communicate constantly, regardless of distance and time. But on the other hand, it's very common for people to never greet their neighbors at all, where nobody in their immediate vicinity aside from friends and family even knows their name. In other words, you could say it's a conspicuously black and white era, where we can communicate more easily and more frequently with people of the same mindset and interests, while not communicating at all with the people who do not, regardless how physically close they may be.

Would a Keiichi-style approach of aggressively getting close to people and pressuring them into friendship still work in an era like this? That was the starting point for the concept of "Higurashi Rei."

Back in the Showa era, it was a world where your neighbors were your people, they went to the same school, lived the same sort of life, you knew the faces of every single family around you, and everyone's personal values were mostly aligned, so I think Keiichi's approach would work there. But today, people with various conflicting values and beliefs live in close proximity to one another, it's an era where people must coexist by respecting one another's diversity. In times like these, Keiichi's approach may work on some people, but there are also others who may view his approach as a form of harassment.

What does it mean to love thy neighbor in a society that recognizes and accepts diversity? When you have people like the villagers of Hinamizawa, who favor deep interaction, and people like the members of Polaris, who loathe such interaction, how can they be respectful of one another while living life together in the same village? I'm not so arrogant to say that I have created the answer to that problem. The solution depicted in this story is merely one idea I came up with at this point in time. Please, I hope that everyone living today can ponder new ideas for mutual understanding and respect, and come up with new answers.

Actually. In the ending of the story, where Marutake's "shameful hobby" is exposed, that segment was much simpler during the plotting stages. Thinking back on it now, it was a very Showa era solution. "Marutake was silenced because they got their hands on his embarrassing secret."

Not just that... I realized even the concept of a "shameful hobby" is perhaps not appropriate in this day and age.

Wouldn't ending it that way contradict the idea of respecting diversity? In other words, I eventually realized that as long as it isn't bothering anyone else, even Marutake's hobby deserves to be respected. And that only occurred to me after the storyboards for the final chapter came in. As a result, we settled on having Keiichi come in, making him never ever disavow Marutake's hobby.

I had to do a lot of serious self-reflection. Even after talking so pompously about the theme in this work, I had written off Marutake's personal hobby as something to be ashamed of. I was constantly saying that we need to respect diversity, but at the same time subconsciously drawing arbitrary lines about what diversity should and shouldn't be acknowledged... I'd like to sincerely apologize to Natsumi-sensei for the grief I caused introducing a sudden change that late in development. But in a sense, I believe it truly transformed into a thrilling "Higurashi" style ending thanks to that.

To finish up. Thank you so much for all your hard work, Kei Natsumi-sensei! Thank you for so carefully and lovingly drawing the future club members for such a long stretch of time! You successfully combined the Reiwa era's worldview with the Hinamizawa style, "Higurashi" style worldview to breathe life into these new characters who, despite their new appearance, clearly inherited the bloodline of the club members from 1983. I'm truly glad I asked Natsumi-sensei to help!

Also. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Seigo Tokiya-sensei for his work on "Hoshiwatashi-hen"! The wonderful conclusion of "Irotoutoshi-hen" would never have been possible without his wonderful art that gave a first impression of Polaris as something uncanny, but later convincing the reader they are neighbors who we can understand and sympathize with. Thank you so much!

And then, to the editors, Koizumi-san, Nozaki-san, and Ono-san. Thank you very much for your help! The wonderful conclusion of this project was only possible thanks to the effective communication between these two artists. Again, thank you so much! I'll strive to ensure we can work together in the future!

All right, I would be delighted if we could meet again, when something else cries. Everyone, thank you so much for always supporting us!

Hello, I'm Natsumi. Higurashi no Naku Koro ni Rei has come to a close. Thank you for staying with us until the very end! Since Tamaki-chan didn't get to play much of an active role in the main story, I drew a short story for the full volume release. I hope Tamaki-chan's charm will get through to everyone...

When I was asked to work on a new Higurashi manga as part of the Higurashi 20th Anniversary Project, I jumped at the chance immediately, and that became Higurashi Rei. I had tons of fun working on it. I'd love to see more and more stories about the the club members as adults, their children who inherited their unique charms, and these endearing new characters! As a fan of horror-style facial expressions, I would've liked to see a few more Fragments featuring bad ends.

(Stop saying things that would make the characters feel sad!)

Special Thanks

Rin Kuroki - Cho + Ori Izumi
Nanami Kutou - Yuu Matoba - My little sister
Editor: Shuuji Nozaki
Everyone at O7th Expansion
BT-san - Seigo Tokiya-sensei
All writers of Higurashi

I'm very happy that I was able to be involved with Higu Rei! Higurashi Forever!! I look forward to the world of Higurashi expanding even farther!

& You!

Natsumi
2024 Dec



Higurashi no Naku Koro ni Rei: Irotoutoshi-hen

This is a free fan translation! Consider buying the manga to support the author and artist, or once it is officially licensed in your language!

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